

THE

DOUBLE DEALER

MARCH, 1921

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AND
MARGINALIA

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The DOUBLE DEALER

".....I can deceive them both by speaking the truth."

THE MAGAZINE IN AMERICA

IS there in the United States today a magazine which is seriously attempting to publish, not this or that material which is demanded by popular taste or which is predetermined by a policy, but simply that material of whatever sort which is, in the opinion of the editors, literature of essential value? There are perhaps two: *The Dial* (and even *The Dial* seems only too likely to print many a thing, not because it is inherently excellent, but because it is new) and *The Yale Review* (which is quite as likely, on the other hand, to print many a thing because it is conservatively scholarly, rather than because it is beautiful). Omitting these, we have not a magazine at all.

It is idle to refer to *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Hearst's Cosmopolitan*, and their like, or to the Munsey and Street and Smith publications, and the cheap sex magazines of New York and Chicago. The artistic degradation of the latter group is almost incredible. They are characterized by a studied abhorrence of real literature. If the periodicals of the former group, by any chance publish a bit of good stuff, it is not intentional. The editors themselves are first to admit that their purpose is not now, and never has been, to accept for publication either prose or verse of essential value, but material of such

a widely popular appeal that the number of readers will multiply to millions.

The Nation? *The New Republic?* *The Review?* *The Freeman?* *The Liberator?* These are political journals.

The North American Review? Also a political journal.

The Atlantic Monthly? A periodical for professors and librarians, sad, depressing, and generally futile; an almost consistently sterile magazine that can afford but little pleasure or profit to a person of any intellectual or artistic vitality.

Century? *Harper's?* *Scribner's?* Respectable middle class magazines. Sad, depressing. They contain an occasional excellent thing, but it is used, not primarily because of its excellence, but because it offers an intrinsic appeal to the magazine's public. (However excellent, if it might disgruntle many or any readers, it would be refused).

Vanity Fair? It will print nothing which is not clever.

Smart Set? This is perhaps the most valuable periodical in America, but it is after all merely the mouthpiece of the country's two most brilliant critics. It will (under certain limitations) print anything good. But two-thirds of its space is given over to the cheapest of sex matter.

Touchstone? An art journal.

The Little Review? A courageous pamphlet, but championing a particular

and perhaps decadent movement—all eyes for a “snot-green sea”. It will put forward nearly anything of merit that is not conservative. But it is, after all, blind of one eye.

The Pagan? A magazine generally gallant enough in the cause of literature and art, but which has shown too often a weakness for the new or the different, regardless of merit.

The Dial, *The Yale Review*, *The Little Review* and *The Pagan* comprise the list of our high-intentioned periodicals of catholic scope. (We are well provided with magazines of verse, and a new one, *The Measure*, is announced). *The Little Review*, as we have remarked, is hot on one scent only. *The Pagan* has been “villagy.” Our only catholic literary magazines, in the broad cultural sense of the word, are *The Dial* and *The Yale Review*. Even these are to a certain extent (the latter, to a great extent) restricted by policy.

Good literature, to be sure, is often or occasionally given to us in many of the others and in many we have not mentioned. But the primary purpose of all of them—except *The Smart Set* in its non-popular portion—is *not* towards good literature. It is toward material of a definite or indefinite class-appeal. They are attempting to acquire or to maintain a circulation among certain classes of readers in the American democracy. In most cases “their method is flattery and their purpose profit.” Any number of excellent productions in prose or verse may be denied a place in any one of them on some technicality—or on some point of policy; because it is too abstruse for

some readers; because of an “unhappy ending;” because it embodies a heresy; because it embodies a platitude; because it is written in rhyme; because it is not written in rhyme; because it is conventional; because it is not conventional. *These magazines can find any number of excuses for refusing a good thing and any number of excellent reasons (moral or financial) for accepting a bad one.*

If *The Double Dealer* misses an opportunity to print a bit of real literature submitted to it, it will be for no cause other than its editors’ stupidity or their healthy fear of the law.

The Double Dealer is entering upon its career with no policy whatever but that of printing the very best material it can procure, regardless of popular appeal, moral or immoral stigmata, conventional or unconventional technique, new theme or old. If we fail to fill our pages with excellent literature, it will be from one of two causes—either because we are incapable of recognizing good stuff when we see it, or because good stuff has not been furnished us. But, God giving us an eye for it, we shall present you with the very best we can find. Naturally, our corps of contributors, if they are to be valuable, must be recruited slowly. Meanwhile, out of a certain natural bent, we prefer to fill the blank pages between excellent matter with “light stuff.” The intentionally light, even when but partially successful, is more palatable fare, we believe, than the unsuccessfully heavy. A skit, a jest, a jingle, making no pretense to the name of literature, is—we are firmly convinced—a more honorable display of ink than a literary failure.

JAMES GIBBONS HUNEKER

JAMES Gibbons Huneker is dead. That fascinating playboy of the arts who kept nine muses guessing has checked out of this "garish unrestful hotel."

I wonder how many men and women of this country realize the loss of the critic who championed Ibsen when Ibsen was synonymous with prurience; who, in the hysteria of Wagner's popularity, pointed *Tristan and Isolde* as the only valid work of Wagnerian art; who blew up the Shawian philosophy myth, blown bladder against blown bladder; who gave us a peep at William James, the apologist for opportunism, and Henri Bergson, the peripatetic lyricist.

Cosmopolitan is a bad word; I choose to think of James Huneker rather as explorer of the continental and English arts and letters who would return to the United States and exhibit, in his many absorbing volumes, the curious flora and fauna to the puzzled and delighted natives. American, except by birth, he hardly was, and perhaps more Viennese than Parisian in sympathy. In the air of that one-time dream city he breathed, a natural child, during those carefree, remote, ante-bellum years.

James Huneker would never admit the war. Untouched by the current swash and tosh he, nevertheless, underestimated the bleak ruin that followed. He did not anticipate the slamming of the gate on that era of laughter and free intelligence, while hunger and death and mob rule, flaunting red banners crying the terrible word "Liberty," hold sway.

And so James Huneker goes, curiously, at the very moment when his own

city, Vienna, is begging alms at America's door, for her starving children. His books and his influence live on. But without him this man-ridden world is surely not a more cheerful place.



THE EPHEMERAL SEX

As a creative artist woman is a complete failure, a nonentity. A sweeping statement but, none the less, a true one. Cull from the illustrious dead, the inspired poets, painters, musicians, sculptors and fitioneers of the past, and find us a woman to whom the term "genius" can be applied. We know very well, dear girls, that you will take issue with us instanter, and cite several of your sex who have proven, in your sweet minds, an exception to the rule.

You will, perhaps, uphold a certain Mrs. Browning, and one Sappho in the ranks of poesy; the two Georges, Sand and Eliot, plus Miss Austen, of "Pride and Prejudice" fame, in that of fiction; Rosa Bonheur, the "dog and pony" painter, you will protest was a mistress of the brush; in sculpture, we don't know just whom you will champion, though we have read somewhere of a young lady in England successfully doing the clay; in the realm of music, the composers of course, we believe we have you positively stumped.

And yet, time was, and is for that matter, when the business of being musician, painter and, most especially poet, was considered quite unmanly, decidedly effeminate. What would this sleepy old world now amount to if this opinion had been taken seriously by those spirited jockeys of Pegasus,

those soldiers of the Ideal, and shamed them into the "manlier" professions of, say, linen-draping, pill-dispensing, prize-fighting, or Shylocking? This momentous question might well be answered by Miss B. Fairfax and her following.

But let us be liberal, or at least tolerant, and consider your case. We can name you a hundred poets all male, any of whom posterity will acclaim, when your Mrs. Browning will be dimly recalled only as the talented wife of Robert Browning. And Sappho? A tenuous myth, a charming legend, an exquisite anthology of love songs, but not a woman. Rosa Bonheur? A facile iconographer, no more—the male instinct projecting itself on her canvasses—man in feminine guise. The same obtains for George Sand and Mrs. Evans. They were more man than woman. So-called women-artists, what are they, for the most part? Fripperied males, some of them minus even the fripperies.

Find us a female Dante, Shakespeare, Beethoven, Bach, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Phidias, Rodin, Cervantes, Dean Swift, etc., etc., (space being shy) and, forthwith, we recant and apologize. It is respectfully submitted that, before you attempt to produce your politicians, you first produce your poets and painters, the leisure being yours, the pleasure ours, the profit posterity's. More power to you.

We have, dear girls, no contention to make with your sex. As a sex you are a delight and a necessity. As mothers, wives and mistresses, you are beyond compare, but, as creative artists, we reaffirm, complete failures, pathetic nonentities.

MOTES AND EYES

Of current faiths the hardest for me to take seriously is spiritualism. With Bernard Shaw I could never imagine a man wearing No. 12 shoes seated in heaven. "That undiscovered country from whose bourne almost everybody is returning," as Mr. De Casseres has it, seems to have lost all its awfulness and mystery and gained a host of table rapping, tambourine shaking spooks—an illimitable empyrean of trap drummers . . . a vaudeville show the acts of which continue unto eternity.

Departing from the time my twelve-year-old fingers besmeared my Mother's Doré Bible counting the angels, the while wondering how all these seraphs could be squeezed into one Paradise, literal mindedness has shocked me. Yet to these very respectable ghouls, the spiritualists, there appears nothing grotesque in the conception of the invisible, unembodied, almost ubiquitous creatures, who worry with such ineffectual modes of communication to their dear ones as straining to tip a table or scrawling disgracefully over a slate.

But there is more than a snicker in all this. "There is tears." Tears, that with our tender minds we cannot gaze down into the dark abyss. We find as Nietzsche found that the dark abyss gazes down into us. Cowards we are born and we live by coward fare, by pretty lies.

You who find spiritualism a joke do you chuckle when your own blind spot is derided? And I who scoff at you both, once missed a train, as scuttling along, my eyes lit on a scattering of effulgent pins, and stopped to pick them

one by one from the dirt to propitiate the crooked minded furies. Doubtless some spiritualist had overlooked them.



A DARK AGE?

The Dark Ages were the centuries that followed the downfall of the Roman sovereignty in Europe, the smashing up of the thousand-year-old Latin culture and its hierarchies of power. The Goths, the Vandals, and the outland Huns, whose names have now become by-words for Cruelty, Destruction and Terror, were upstart people whose governments resembled closely what would now be called Democracy. In reality, they were hordes of demagogue-driven, boss-bullied men and women; their leaders, with virile exceptions, like Alaric of the Ostro-Goths, ordinary tyrants indistinguishable from Tammany bosses, or Russian Commissars of the Proletariat.

The world was dark. Fitful dynasties arose and fell with bloodshed and torture. Men and women led furtive, feral lives. In this mad terror-rid time it was impossible that art or culture or even decency should survive. "Where is security, there is light," and there was no safe place on the world's ridge save in the cloister.

Out of this chaos, after hundreds of years, arose the feudal system, aided by the Roman Church. An aristocratic hierarchy. Equilibrium was established. The flowering of this period was The Renaissance.

The world is now undergoing a second barbarian invasion. Like the first,

it is extended over a period of several centuries. Beginning in the eighteenth, with the French revolution, checked in the nineteenth, it has received a tremendous impetus from the August, 1914, cataclysm. Being in the midst of it we can no more accurately foresee its results than could a scholar or senator of Rome, at the first sack of the city by the Goths have foretold the intellectual depredation of Europe that was to follow. But this invasion, like the other, is a tremendous and irresistible kink in the "world line," one which has about it the "majesty of doom."

The Russian revolution with its apotheosis of the laborer, is directly comparable to the democratic theory of the equality of man. One is a more advanced and violent step; but both work towards the same horrible denouement, the seizure of the power and the glory by the savage, the shameless and the ignorant, who have always outnumbered, and will always outnumber, the intelligent and humane. We see no difference between them, either in their theory of equality, or in their reality of mob-mastery; between the consolidation of power into the hands of monopoly, and communist leaders who rail against these monopolists.

From such a barbarian invasion the one result can but be another dark age, an age of shadow, an age of bloodshed and torture, with men clinging to their rat-like lives in trepidation. If the altars of culture can be barricaded against a capricious and unrestrained mob, it will be a new thing under the sun. No civilization has yet been able to survive the trampling of those terrible hooves.

THE MOVIES

Whilst the newspapers scream with sadistic glee of this or that "menace," of the Soviet bomb throwers, of invasion of the Japanese, we sorry sheep join in and take up the cry. We forget the menace of our own making, which grows fat in the heart of Broadway and thrives as well on Main street, Kankakee?—THE MOVIES.

We are not fanatics. With the inventor of the celluloid drama we have no quarrel—but with the herd at large who swallow blandly the mush and slime of all the canny producers of the thing.

Would you have your little man bud from adolescence with the belief that great fortunes are invariably made by frenzied bounders who pull day long at a ticker tape and sail through golden nights in the arms of other men's wives?

Would you wish your pink-cheeked darling with the dimpled knees to imagine that she, a potential debutante, will be captivated by the ambassador from the Argentine, and will live later a life of intrigue and duplicity in the gayest capitals of the continent, when she could have married Jim, who worked his way up to vice-president and a modest little home with chintz curtains?

Would you have these little minds, eager and imaginative, conclude that cocktails flow unceasingly in all the larger restaurants, that the waiters therein are ever affable and appreciative of gratuities, that stern judges grant pardons at the drop of a gray-haired mother's tear, or that the marines are on hand the world over to deliver us from out the villain's clutches, and all the rest?

You would not. So why shrug shoulders at the menace? As for the formulae you are instilling into the youthful brain cells to the contrary, they can be of no avail. It is patent that the teachings of such stupendous creatures as vampires and pie-hurlers will far outweigh in importance the principles of a mere parent. If your progeny turn adventuress or satyr there is small wonder. You have sanctioned these scenic atrocities on life—you have even believed them.



THE LOLLYPOPULACE

IT was a saying of Bion, the ancient Bucolic minstrel, that it is impossible to please the multitude except by becoming a sweetmeat or a cheap wine. But this was before the day of the Yellow Press and the Silent Drama. Nowadays all that seems necessary to please Multitude is to divorce your wife, shoot your mother-in-law, rob a bank or run for president. The Press and the movies do the rest.

If you prefer a simpler and, sometimes, safer procedure, and you are or are not ill-favored, join a cinema circus and get in the ring with Fairbanks, Pickford, Talmadge *et cie*. This claps you in the "sweetmeat" class, at once.

Better, perhaps, stick to your publicity through the "legitimate." If needs be, and you have the "coin," take on a press agent to cajole the boys behind the guns into believing you the "guy" or the "goil" of the hour. Have your photograph made in the divers romantic attitudes of inspiration, perspiration, and prophylaxis. Mary Garden, in a

one-piece bathing suit emerging from the surf at Narragansett Pier. Olga Petrova snapped "pen in hand" on the point of perpetrating a "pome" for the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. Jack Dempsey cavorting with the little ones at the Coronado Beach Orphanage. Gamaliel Harding in the act of landing a whale off the Florida coast.

Why is it that all presidents, elect and elected, must be flaunted before our humble eyes as big-game hunters, modern Ik Waltons, potential Chick Evaneses? It's certainly a "helluva" compliment to American intelligence. Bion was right, after all, "it is impossible to please the multitude except by becoming a sweetmeat or a cheap wine."

The Accident

The Omnipotent was showing off the earth to one of his friends.

"Observe," he said, "the singular beauty of that ocean! See how its colors blend as the waves surge through them! I flatter myself that I did rather a good day's work in creating that."

"Very fine indeed," replied his friend.

"And over there, on the eastern side, the stern loveliness of that mountain! That touch of snow on the summit sets off so strikingly the rolling green of the lower slopes. Not bad at all as an artistic endeavor, now is it?"

"Most commendable," agreed his friend.

"And look closely," he went on, "at the remarkable grace of some of these birds and animals. Don't you admire the easy sweep of that sea-gull's wing, and the rippling glide of the tiger?"

"That reminds me," said his friend. "What is that strange creature which seems everywhere to be infesting your world? It is not beautiful to look at; it seems to have set up shells or nests that are certainly hideous; and from the horrible groans and cries it emits I gather it is not happy. Fortunately, it seems to be engaged principally in mutual extermination; but what under the sun is it?"

The Omnipotent blushed slightly and cleared his throat.

"To tell the truth," he murmured, "I rather hoped you'd overlook that. That is a little experiment I made one day that I am sorry to say turned out quite badly. I have tried several times to destroy it, but so far I have discovered no real cure for the pest."

"It is called Man."

M. A. DE FORD.

A Request

When I am out of fashion
Like hats that once they wore,
Or some long-opened ration,
And no one reads me more,
Then give me some compassion
Who loved my books before.

When new young men write verses
That I don't understand,
And thick gray mist immerses
My mind-seen glittering land
And only weary hearse
Travel its golden sand,

Say to that *jeunesse dorée*,
Though it be trite to say,
That I too found a glory
Far eastward of Cathay
And wrote a golden story
That's had its golden day.

LORD DUNSANY.

The Rider Through Relativity

MY death warrant," said Aurel Sharrington. He stared at the sheet in his hand, glaring white in the electric light that showered from his table lamp. The familiar writing of his old friend Dr. Hameroy, swam and swelled before his eyes. The long angular characters began to resemble, as he thought, lines of dancing skeletons, grotesquely interlocked.

"I have made my final and decisive laboratory test," ran a passage in the letter. "If I did not know that you would damn me for hiding the truth, I would lie and say: there is hope. But your parents named you Aurelius, and I believe you have managed to prove that they did not misname you."

"Dear Mark," murmured Sharrington, with a smile, "the compliment is forced, but he felt obliged to sugar-coat that pill."

He let the letter drop on the desk, and reached for a sheet of paper. The pen thudded into the great crystal ink-stand, then whispered over the coarse, hand-made paper:

My Dear Eve: You are free—for I'm going to be free. There's no hope for me, I hear—so there is hope for you. Forgive the drama at the tail-end of my destiny—and be happy with whomever you may fee is necessary. . . .

"How banal!" he muttered, tore the sheets into bits, seized another and wrote:

My Dearest Eve . . .

"That will do," said he, "so far as steel and ink are concerned. She will

understand, as an intelligent wife should. The rest—"

He opened a drawer in the desk—a small flat object shone with a dull blue-black lustre—he laid it upon the edge of the desk—a small automatic pistol.

"—the rest is steel and fire."

Odd, he thought, that one should be playful, almost witty—considering the occasion. A hangman's humor—or philosophy. The one thing that might reconcile one to remain is that one is constantly making new discoveries—those impressive death-bed sayings preserved so piously may be true after all—the last flare of the expiring match.

Aurel Sharrington had come to a snarl in the threads of his existence. And he was for a Gordian solution—scarcely in keeping with the teachings of the philosopher after whom he had been named. His eye encompassed the triangle made by the two sheets of paper and the sinister weapon.

"Here is my existence geometrically laid out," he mused, "a triangle—the bill for life and the bill for love. They've presented them a bit prematurely considering I am only thirty-three—thirty-three, three and thirty. Good old Hameroy will not bear me a grudge, I hope, for falsifying his forecast and dying of something else. He cannot condemn me to life to serve him as a kind of guinea-pig—it would not be fair."

"As for Eve, she has grown used to living alone. She is Eve's true daughter and will survive. I was never meant to be her Adam. Well, to make a long matter of thirty-three years and God

knows how many months of suffering—short—”

His pale thin hand reached for the brutal firearm. He held it fondly in his hands—like a book or a crucifix. His eyes swam with sudden tears—faintness came upon him—the tides of life seemed to be already fleeing from his body before the blow. Through half-opened eyes he saw the shining ring of the muzzle. It fascinated him. Again his lips fashioned words—words scarcely audible:

“The ring of gold meant bondage—for both. This ring of steel means release—for both. It may be as difficult for a rich man to enter heaven as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. But here’s a tiny orifice through which a poor fool may pass into a good, sound sleep.”

His will, springing into one soaring stream of resolution bade his finger fire. And the finger obeyed.

Grey mist. Clouds that wallow, rise and fall. A clanging as of countless anvils. A planetary ringing in the ears—as of a thin, ethereal music, a burning vibration sweet and endless, swelling, dwindling, dying away and returning once more.

“Awake!” said a voice. “You cannot escape the law. You cannot escape life. In the blundering fashion of your fellows you sought to break the thread—by crude mechanical means.”

A figure grew plain beside him. It was a tall man clad in a tight-fitting garment which clung to his heroic form like silk and shimmered like silver. His face was august and sorrowfully serene. A radiance seemed to stream from it, a mellow light poured from his great sad eyes. His hair glittered like

a crown of crystals and curled into points like flame.

“I know,” said Sharrington, “this is fever.” Once more he drummed up all his will-power. “This is a hospital—you are a surgeon. Spare yourself a useless job.”

“The useless task was yours,” said the stranger, “and an evil task. This is not a hospital nor am I a surgeon. Yet in my way I have effected cures. I saw you—by a science you could not comprehend—and I transported you hither. In our world physical intervention as you know it in yours, is no longer necessary. We work with other forces.”

The voice was full of the resonant harmonies of precious metal. Never before had Sharrington heard such a voice nor so strange an accent. It might have been the English of another age, and yet the idiom was modern.

“You are my guest, my passenger.”

“Your guest—your passenger? Whose? Where? In what? You have interfered—I had an important engagement—”

“My name does not matter,” said the strange being. “It is distinguished if not honoured among men. You are in the cabin of the “Stellar Shuttle.” The “Stellar Shuttle” is an astroplane—such as are in common use in our system. It is impelled by intensified waves of ether and its maximum speed exceeds by far the speed of your sun’s waves of light. We have mastered forces which are as yet unrevealed to you, even though you are upon the threshold of revelation. I am an inhabitant of Ypranil, the largest planet in the system of Sirius. Our powers, the fruit of millions of years of development might seem almost divine to you. Yet there are worlds that are further advanced

upon the eternal spiral than even Ypranil."

"The environment," said Aurel Sharrington," is more than uncanny—but I am used to hoaxes—"

The majestic figure, with a profound melancholy written upon its face, reached forth in the luminous haze and touched something that shone upon what seemed a wall. There was a faint clatter and a flash, a thin and singing note. A dark well opened before Sharrington's eyes and in this there span what appeared to be a globe of hollow crystal or a bubble with a surface of the most intense and brilliant black. The enclosure of the well thrilled with unimaginable vibrations. Across the dark, apparently liquid surface of the bubble, a small and ruddy disc swam into sight.

"What is that?" asked Sharrington.

"The planet called Earth which you were so anxious to leave," said the luminous being. "You have left it."

"I see the outlines of continents," said Sharrington, "the splashing, spatulate shape of North America, the triangle of South America—like a Newfoundland's head. But our kinemagraphic science is so well developed that this trick is mere child's play."

"We are travelling slowly," said the white figure, "look again."

A blush of silvery lustre swept over the spinning globe. Over its surface, like smoke taking shape, like an image emerging out of blurred distances into focus, he saw a landscape quiver into view. It grew larger and more distinct, the edges pitched mistily away at the sides, the top and bottom. Still enlarging, a city loomed up, silhouettes of buildings, domes and towers whirled by, familiar in shape, yet strange in as-

pect. Now a street appeared—he knew it—it was his own. People passed to and fro along this street, automobiles, an electric car, wagons. The door of his house opened; he saw himself descend the steps in the purple-tinted light.

"It is an interesting bit of stained film," said he, "presumably taken from an aeroplane."

"We have overtaken a ray of light that left that spot on Earth two days ago," said the stranger quietly. "We are travelling somewhat more slowly than this ray. Were we travelling at the same speed, the life you see would be fixed in simultaneousness—that is it would stand still as in a photograph—thus:"

The movement in the street was petrified on the instant, frozen in action as in a photograph.

"Naturally," said Sharrington, "the machine has been stopped."

"We are travelling at the speed of 298,000 of your miles per a second of your time—"that is the speed of your sunlight. But that is as nothing to the velocities of the ether vibrations."

Sharrington's sight, hearing, smell and touch seemed to blend into one. He felt himself transfused as in a core of ardent and intolerable light. And the thought came to him that this must indeed be death, and that it might even be some limbo in the "vast obscure," some hell.

He saw the same street, but now a house was being built close to his father's house. He gave a cry—he remembered the building of that house years ago; it was before the era of films. A street car, drawn by horses, came swaying down the street. He saw his mother descend the steps—he bent

his burning eyes upon the spinning mirror—how young she looked! how beautiful she was! He saw himself, a school boy in knee-breeches, running up to embrace her.

With incredible swiftness, with winging stretches of darkness and light, the mysterious sphere or bubble flashed and glittered and each was a day or a night recaptured from eternity.

"We are advancing slowly against the transpired Earth-rays," said the traveller from Ypranil. "They are breaking against our cosmic mirror like waves against the prow of a boat. We move at will and at ease—whithersoever we please—it is all a matter of computation."

Sharrington passed his hand across his eyes. "I am dazed," he said, "it is all a dream and an evil one—it is all vanity."

"It is all relativity," said the other.

"Relativity," murmured Sharrington, and shuddered, he could not say why, "ah, yes. Einstein's Theory—Rutherford and his system of releasing atomic forces."

"All these things we knew and used hundreds of years ago—of our years—which are as many thousands of yours."

"It is terrible! terrible! cried Sharrington. "Humanity will be lost and damned forever—the dead past will no longer be able to bury its dead."

"Only to your earthly eyes and only because Earth is still a rude, imperfect planet, are these things terrible. The past is not dead—somewhere, if you have but eyes to see it—or instruments—it is always present. Somewhere it lives—as you live now!"

"Unfortunately," said Aurel Sharrington.

"The past is preserved to all eternity," said the mysterious stranger, "it is forever flowing, forever flying through distance. Relatively, the speed of the images projected from the Earth are to some of the speeds which we already master, as the motion of a glacier is to the motion of a cataract. Thus all that is born to light flies on eternally through the dark of interstellar space. Where there is an eye to intercept and gather the ray, it comes to life. Your days and deeds, like my days and deeds, are without end, whether measured by the life of a midge or the life of a planet."

He was silent for a time, then asked:

"Shall we unravel the past? Shall we salvage something of this hidden but indestructible record? Things familiar to you from your own destructible records? Shall we read Time backward? Pursue Life downward towards its source?"

"Wonderful!" cried Sharrington. "You must accept that word as a tribute from me—for my father had taught me that my motto in life was to be *nil admirari*. Your miracles are plausible because they are scientific. One of our well-known terrestrial writers—unknown, no doubt, in Ypranil, H. G. Wells, has already ventured into this field. He wrote a book called the "Time Machine."

"He wrote it, now you may live it," said the deep and golden voice. "Shall we overleap, overtake decades, centuries, millenia?"

A sudden terror came upon Sharrington.

"Oh, no more of the Earth," he cried. "May the night swallow it up in everlasting mercy. Let no man lift the curtain—let it hide its sorrow, crime, mad-

ness, misery and death. Write your own history—or unwrite it. Leave ours alone. It is a tragedy."

The stranger gave no heed.

"We shall pass through the years like level sunlight through a forest. Today, by your mundane calendar it is the 15th of October, 1920. I shall now steer the "Stellar Shuttle" into the light wave of the end of 1918. I shall bring Europe to your view."

Upon the spherical reflector, with its miraculous powers of concentration and magnification, a great waste floated into view—a region bare and hideous—like one vast sore.

"The Sahara!" cried Sharrington.

"Flanders and the Champagne," said the man from Ypranil.

Great masses of grey troops moved eastward. They resembled an enormous slate-colored serpent whose scales glittered in the sunlight. Narrow channels like the canals of Mars swallowed them up. Ruins began to smoke, out of them arose houses, flaming, spires leaped into the air, church walls erected themselves piecemeal. The buildings burst into puffs of smoke, flame and dust and spat back shells into the throats of howitzers which first bloomed with smoke and then belched fire. Thousands of rude graves were opened; corpses were borne into battle and came to life. Dead and dismembered men rose from the ground and were whole. They embraced one another and drew swords and bayonets from one another's breasts and ran to cover. Shattered war planes rose flaming from the earth and sailed serenely through the air. The waste of sand blew up and became green. The deep pits and round shell-craters arose under great domes of sand that were showered upon them amidst

fountains of flame, and vanished. Levelled forests leaped erect from prostrate trunks and splintered boughs. The roads were black with men, animals and vehicles pushing on towards the cities. Thousands of soldiers embarked and crossed the Channel. Darkened cities sprang to light. Out of the sea wrecks rose foaming, burst into flame. Swimming seamen leaped aboard from bursts of foam, jetsam gathered itself and streamed into the hatches out of the sea. The vessels steamed away, stern first, following a white wake, the wave curling forward at the bows.

A pageant of great capitals ensued. Paris streamed across the dark mirror. A narrow street; an open café, an excited crowd, a stout bearded man stretched upon a marble table,—he opens his eyes, is lifted to the floor, leaps into his chair, a puff of smoke, he declaims passionately to an admiring group.

"That is Jean Jaurés," said Sharrington. "I heard him speak once."

London, Amsterdam, Berlin swept by—crowds, traffic, newsboys with flaring papers. Vienna unrolled its glorious concentric streets. Serajevo melted into view, decked in flags and wreaths. A man and a woman lay bleeding in a carriage, again a puff of smoke, they sat up, and bowed to the public.

"What is life—what is death" asked the inhabitant of Ypranil. "Life is but a running thread of light between infinity and infinity. Backwards or forwards—all is one. You have just seen how the Great War ended—ended—as seen from a certain point in space."

"Yes," said Sharrington, "the gods who turn the crank of the universe care little whether it runs forward or back-

ward. All is illusion to us—their slaves, their dupes—all except Light."

A deep sigh broke from the lips of the man from Ypranil. His voice trembled, anguish tore at its mellow music. Torment disturbed his features, tears rolled down his cheeks.

"You can weep!" cried Sharrington, "you have tears then—even in Ypranil?"

"Light!" said the stranger, "the glorious, the eternal. I was once part of light—I was its bearer—now I am fated to roam the inter-stellar cold and darkness—a lonely spark in one vast immensity."

Sharrington gazed at his companion with awe and fascination. And now he knew that he was man. His soul widened. Visions of ineffable splendour, vast and apocalyptic burst upon it.

"Your name!" he exclaimed—"who are you . . .?"

"I am the Dweller in Ypranil," said the stranger, "but that is only one of my dwellings—for an hour or for an aeon."

A silence. The astral mirror sang and coruscated.

"A sea!" cried Sharrington. "Ah! Sandy Hook! the forts! Manhattan, the Woolworth, the Singer buildings, the Flatiron—"

Plumes of steam soared from the crests of the giant city; banners flew. The streets streamed with human beings, the cars crawled along dragging their shadows. Hundreds of domes and cupolas and spires glittered. This choral in towering stone, this litany of labour—almost he heard its voice. A great emotion overcame Aurel Sharrington. Earth-sick he grew—homesick—he stretched out his hands to the scene.

"This too, said the Strange Being, "is only the fabric of a dream. I shall increase our speed along this ray—the metropolis will dismantle and dissolve itself."

Skyscraper after skyscraper began to cloud itself in veils of scaffolding. Turrets were unrigged, finials, crests, flagpoles vanished, great ashlar sank into the depths, the steel skeletons emerged, fell apart and melted away. Soon the yawning pits of the excavations were seen, earth and sand leaped out of the carts to meet the shovels of the men who restored them to their place. The soil smoothed itself and burst into grass, children came and gamboled there.

The streets opened and disgorged beams, columns and shining tracks, then engulfed rivers of rock and earth and closed again. The city shrank, great gaps appeared. The roadways and rails of the Manhattan Bridge were taken up, the vertical carriers fell away from the huge cables, the cables writhed from the towers like enormous serpents, the towers disintegrated stone by stone. The Brooklyn Bridge fell apart, girder by girder, strand by strand, stone by stone.

Sometimes the focus or the plane of vision seemed to hover directly above the streets, then again it receded and the details of the Earth's surface broadened into landscapes as seen from some lofty peak, again these dissolved into murky continents that glowed dull red or grey or green. And then, as with a sudden lurch, the spherical shape of the Earth disclosed itself and Sharrington looked upon the familiar outlines of North America and the northern crown of ice. Light and darkness alternated and the days and the years

were as the rhythmic breathing of some all-embracing cosmic organism, the winking of some sidereal machine.

Once again the Earth seemed to swoop upward—another war “began.” Grant and Lee met at Appomattox Court House to arrange the gigantic duel. The South prepared great battle-fields, towards these crawled the wearied and broken armies, blue and grey, collided in a foam of smoke and dust, fire and blood, separated and marched away, all ranks filled and all flags flying. Flaming cities rose phoenix-like, out of the ruins and smiled. Gettysburg leaped to tremendous life then ebbed into the peace of green fields. Vicksburg blazed like a blood-red star, then mirrored itself in the river. The “Monitor” and the “Merrimac” were born in a welter of fire, smoke and foam, disengaged, steamed away and were dismantled on the ways. Bull Run came—the last battle of the war, and ended with the Union troops marching gaily into Washington. The Negro problem was solved. There were jubilees, dancing and feasts upon the plantations.

Sharrington saw caravans of prairie-schooners rolling eastward from the Rockies. In California men filled up great gaps in the wounded Earth and cast into them handfuls of quartz and gleaming nuggets—frenziedly, as though mad to be rid of the yellow curse.

“There are the giant redwoods,” said Sharrington, pointing, “by this devolution one might see them dwindle into saplings.”

“They are the oldest living things on your Earth,” said his guide, “over three thousand years old. The range of my mirror reaches only to a radius of 960 years.”

The great cities dwindled from the surface of the continent and became groups of huts, of tents, and then the prairies and the forests rolled over them, like a green tide. Herds of buffaloes stormed like dark clouds across the plains. Railway lines were torn up. Mail-coaches lurched and swayed between the ancient towns. Robert Fulton ran the last steamboat down the Hudson. The War of the Revolution rages along the Atlantic seaboard; it closes—the signers of the Declaration of Independence erase their names one by one from the document. Bales of tea leap from the waters of Boston Bay into the hatches of the British merchantman.

New York becomes Nieuw Amsterdam. The British cede it to the Dutch. The Indian chief returns the 24 dollars for which he had sold Manhattan. The Hollanders withdraw. The smoke of wigwams goes up from green Manhattan.

The Pilgrim Fathers leave the land with thanksgivings; the “Mayflower” bursts into sail and wallows her way stern first back to England. The wilderness triumphant,—the sea—savages—rockbound capes—hills, white beaches, swamps, islands rise and fall, flee and fade. The Earth is seized at the end of a flying ray of light and turned like a jewel upon a pin. Cuba,—like an enormous lizard basking in foam, in a field of sapphire. Three caravels moored in a bight. On a shining strand, bright against dark groves of palms, men in glittering armour, in velvet jerkins, priests in cassocks, bearded sailors, golden banners with the Madonna. Half-naked savages in brilliant feathers stand at gaze. Embarkation. The caravels set sail. Col-

umbus leaves San Salvador to discover Europe. A hemisphere is delivered up to oblivion; the violated sea recovers its sanctity and its secrecy.

The Strange Being played upon a number of keys with a rhythmic touch as one plays upon the keyboard of a piano.

Sharrington's life now began to unroll backward before his eyes. He saw himself at school, saw himself playing and even fighting in the fields near his home. He saw his mother all in black and himself standing about a grave in the cemetery. He saw this opened, the coffin lifted out and transported in a hearse to his house. A little while and he was walking the streets hand in hand with his father. His mother came to meet them, holding wide her arms.

A sob broke from him; tears burnt like fiery acids in his eyes. He saw himself as a fair and radiant child of four—of three—of two years, toddling beside his nurse. He saw himself as an infant, as a suckling at his mother's breast in the sunlit garden behind the old house. Then men and women went up and down the front steps and those that came down carried flowers in their hands. The doctor's carriage drove away.

"This is the 4th of August, 1887," said the master of the machine—

"My birthday," said Aurel Sharrington.

"Let us send the astroplane in pursuit of the ray."

The mysterious engine began to wind up the past along this ray, pursuing it into the abysses of space, this time in the direction of flight. And Sharrington saw leaf after leaf of his outward life unfold again—his mother's funeral,

his horseback rides in the Park, his meeting, his walks with Eve, their marriage, their honeymoon five hundred miles away. Then the day when he first fell ill, his visits to Mark Hameroy's office, the estrangement between him and Eve. Once he started and almost cried out as he saw Eve leave the doctor's office after he himself had just passed out of the door. The fateful evening came again. He saw himself enter the house and vanish. But he knew that within he was ascending the silent, carpeted steps, sitting brooding over the letters, holding heroic debate with himself, opening the drawer—ah, the weapon still felt cold and heavy in his hand—the shining ring, the ring—the Ring of the Eternal occurrence.

The terrified old housekeeper telephoned to Dr. Hameroy and to Mrs. Sharrington. They came, as if by accident, together, and entered Sharrington's study—Mrs. Barbour remaining below. Dr. Hameroy ran to his friend's side and felt his pulse.

"Dead," said he, "but still warm." Mrs. Sharrington gave a cry.

He twisted the pistol out of the hand that clutched it.

"Unloaded," he said, as he flung it on the desk. "I had seen to that myself."

Eve Sharrington's eyes were fixed upon Hameroy's letter which lay open and disgust broke from her lips. Hameroy snatched the letter and tore it into shreds. And now she saw the other letter: My Dear Eve . . . and began to weep.

"It was the letter that was loaded, Eve," said he, as he caught the woman

by the arms and looked into her eyes,—"for our sakes."

She stared at him and was silent. And then he knew that the love that had grown up between them was as dead as the man before them who had been the obstacle to its fulfillment.

Aurel Sharrington was not at all disturbed by this visit from his wife and his friend at this unearthly hour, for to him all hours had become unearthly.

He had voyaged into the silences and the secracies and had returned with the ultimate wisdom of all time. A sweet smile hovered upon his lips; his whole expression seemed to say: "I am content. For I know that not only time and size and space are relative, but that all things are so—life and death and immortality, happiness and sorrow—and love."

HERMAN GEORGE SCHEFFAUER.

A philosopher is the man who, in the midst of the bombardment, calls out to inquire what the fight is about.

The troublesome feature of love is that it is a crime which one cannot commit without an accomplice.—*Baudelaire*.

He was a bold man who first swallowed an oyster.

Wisdom is folly grown haggard.

The Brazen Verses

I.

*"Time shakes his feathers through the fields of space,
A swooping falcon in a headlong race—
Racing wherefrom? whereto?"* That is but air
You vomit speaking, idle questioner.
The fields of space themselves and flying time
Are phantoms only, empty as this rhyme.
Your falcon Time's a self-devouring wraith,
Space even such, and even such is death.

II.

*"Then what-a-devil saves us? We are are lost
If all that predicates us is a ghost."*
Lost then you are. All solid things that swarm
And hurtle in this universal storm,
Suns, constellations, palaces of form,
Melt into nothingness and pass away.
Tomorrow is already yesterday.

III.

"Lost, lost, all lost 'twixt Hell and Heaven?"
Ay, lost, all lost, and hell and heaven even.
You and your fancy that so magnifies
You and your beauty in your fondling eyes—
You and your beauty and your self itself
Nimbly turn nothing like a goblin elf.
You and your beauty are a ghostly bubble;
Naught could preserve you, were you worth the trouble.

IV.

*"Tell me, grey Pythagoras, what might I be,
Who rouse you so to fury?"* A sort of goblin flea.
Leaping out of nothing into nihility.

JOHN MCCLURE.

The Rendezvous

IT was at the ball of Prospero. Ancillato the poet, with his ruffles and lace and long curling hair, approached the Contessa Violante arm-in-arm with a stranger.

"To those who dislike me, my lady," he said, "I introduce my friends."

"A delicate revenge, my lord," murmured Violante.

"You are too kind," said Ancillato, nettled.

"Ah, I've ceased being kind."

"Shall you miss it?" And Ancillato turned away, leaving the new cavalier to the mercy of the beautiful lady.

As he picked his way daintily down the gilded room, through groups of human beings more porcelain than Dresden dolls, the poet reflected that there was still acid on that lovely tongue. The Contessa could not forget him; but must one be sorry for people who are sorry for themselves? None of us should be sad long about anything, nor could we if we forgot ourselves in being kind to others! Ancillato sighed.

An easier way out of her despondency occurred to the Contessa Violante, face to face with the stranger, than the resolute quest of those to whom one might be kind. She bowed coldly to a handsome youth in black, with the blue stockings of a Monsignore. It was Dionigi, her cousin the abbé, whom she had lately dismissed because he had ill-treated her, though she had always felt drawn toward the church. What was Ancillato to her? What was Dionigi? She would replace them with another and a better cavalier.

The Contessa had thought of nothing but love since she was sixteen, and she was now twenty-six. Though one should lead such a life truly to sympathize with it, it may be guessed that Violante was too much occupied to go about looking for the lonely. And in her deeper moments she felt that her profound desire for a great passion was quite enough in itself to overshadow, on the facade of her life's cathedral, any singularities it might perpetrate there.

"Coat-tails," she mused, "coat-tails. I know my loves by their coat-tails. Flying, lost, lovely coat-tails."

"You do not like me," said the cavalier.

"You dance too well," answered the Contessa.

She wished she might understand what the signalling of his eyes portended. She felt convinced it was very bold, that message he kept flashing her; and she treasured it as one does an enticing volume in an unknown tongue.

"You do not like me," repeated the cavalier.

"You astonish me," said the Contessa, "but God forbid I should dislike you because of that!"

The cavalier pervaded her. When at the end of the ball she floated down the grand staircase on his arm, between the long lines of flambeaux, and was magnificently placed by him in her chair, with a gesture of indescribable grace, she suspected that she had at last met her master. It made her indignant, but it was a wonderful experience.

"You do not like me," said the cavalier a third time as he draped his cloak

about his shoulders preparatory to attending her home.

"I may not like you, but I am afraid I love you," whispered the Contessa, disturbed.

"I shall put you to the test," he answered, with an impudent look.

At her dressing-table the next morning, Violante considered the possible termination of an affair with the stranger. It promised to be unusual. Her common-sense told her to incriminate as large a portion of the race as possible, and she called to her maid to write in her diary, "I am sorry for young persons whose energy is not conscientiously directed to the achievement of a grand passion." She then dictated a new creed to strengthen herself: "Not to cease the endeavor to be attractive, reserved and sensitive; but to pass now to farther aims, to be a leader, to let my voice sound as resonantly as possible for *l'amour*."

This done and recorded, the Contessa herself took a quill, and with flaming cheeks wrote to the cavalier, promising to meet him that very afternoon. Never before had she been so precipitate. But she reflected that there is no tomorrow for lovers except what they make for themselves.

She left the villa in the cool of the afternoon, going out by the formal garden and crossing the hedge. It was a half hour's stroll to the lake, on a path which grew more wild as it wound through flowering bushes towards a declining sun.

Though she had purposely come a little late, the cavalier was not at the appointed spot. She gazed disconsolately at the sandy beach, the overhanging shrubbery, and the great rocks. Why had she dressed so elaborately for a

rendezvous in the open; why had she consented to such a plan at all? With a sign she closed her parasol; and lifting her brocaded gown a little, she seated herself on the inhospitable sand.

Dionigi had been a great disappointment to Violante. He had at times ventured to ignore her without convincing her that she deserved to be ignored. That was his first offense. He was one of those solitary boys, always humorous and always beautiful, whom an elegant woman admits to companionship before they have begun to master the forms of address which make a man indispensable. Yet to speak truly, the Contessa had not found Dionigi as tender as he might have been. Epigrammatic he was, and adroit; but what is love? Violante had asked herself as she gave the youth his *congé*—what is love without a little kindness?

Before Dionigi there had been Ancillato, the poet. A poet can never convince others of their inferiority to him. It is not his business to. He praises people to heaven, till they marvel at themselves; and then he wanders peacefully on, and lets them fall to earth without a parachute. It is cruel, but it is poetry. Violante had watched in positive disbelief the open progress of her butterfly towards another flower. She wondered whether it would ever be possible to make a poet into a man; and as soon as she could, she thrust the painful experience from her mind.

Before Ancillato there had been Don Diego, the eternally jesting, the soldier of fortune, prompt at dinners. Don Diego had conversed with her on equal terms, never imagining the depths in her soul which cried out for exploration. A simple man, he treated her as one human being naturally treats another.

But one can never achieve a grand passion that way. Before Diego, there had been Sixtus, and the others. Sitting with chin in palm, the Contessa languidly reflected that however singular her lot had been, she had at least always had a youth to deal with; but alas, her present lover was eluding her!

She rose, and walked to and fro, digging the sand with her parasol. Yet as she gazed about her at the hills across the lake, and the white clouds, she remembered that her poet had once remarked in his charming unliquored way, "we are spectators before whom Nature leads her pageantry, connoisseurs to whom she exhibits her jewelled things."

In the beautiful sunset it seemed to Violante that while it might be a luxury of spirit to indulge so gentle an egotism, such ideas were a grave judgment on her somewhat frivolous days.

A madness in the shape of a blue haze stole over the evening. As it became more and more certain that the cavalier was not to appear, the Contessa relaxed her vexation, and was apprised of a feeling akin to relief. The hour was fair, and her woman's soul yearned suddenly for the solitude of the summer night. She had with her a small volume, to which she was accustomed to resort when lovers were not sufficiently entertaining; and, taking it from her reticule, she flung herself carelessly on the beach and began to read:

NOVEL, ATTRIBUTED TO THE AUTHOR OF THE MATERIALS FOR DISPELLING ENNUI.

The isles of Shikoku are a quiet place. The sea is quiet, and so are the

young men. Strange things happen when the young men are quiet. One yellow boy with black hair and slanting eyes fabricated fans by day, and by night dreamt in his father's garden.

In the head of the Dragon is a certain star on the circle of perpetual sight. What the youth accomplished in his father's garden no one will ever know. But his twenty-nine fans—the most magical fans that ever came from the Isles of Shikoku—are themselves, when open, half-circles of apparition, and the dragon is on them, and the only star that blazes brightly is a star in the head of the Dragon, and the blazing of that star passes belief.

So it was that the Empress, as she mused upon her fan of Shikoku, said to her ladies, "Who would not open her heart as one opens the segment of a fan, if only one were sure that in its radius a star could be enmeshed, to blaze as this one does, forever?"

At the moment a figure passing was heard to murmur, "The hangings of the universe can be rented at a nominal expense. Everyone should be reasonably near a star; and music will be furnished those who dream of this."

"How delightful literature is!" exclaimed the Contessa when she had read this novel for the third time. *"But how little the Empress knew of men!"*

She lay on her side and gazed about her. The haze had grown deeper, and the last rays of the sun reached through it, tapering shafts of gray and rose. Poplar sprays dropped before her, and the lake and hills beneath them were like phantoms on a silk screen, brushed over heedlessly with the splendours of the dying day. The foliage by the shore

became unearthly; or perhaps it was the glassy lake which suspended all as in a dream.

The Contessa felt her eyes fill to overflowing. A presence lived behind the exquisite hour, something more tender, something indeed more passionate, than her rarest moments had imagined. She began to receive messages from no human fingers,—messages like the sea, washing towards her in long tides. And now she knew at last that she was possessed; that she was overpowered, absorbed in a greater life than her own.

Hours and hours afterward she took the path to the villa. As she came near

the garden she might have seen, if she had looked, a cloaked figure leaning upon the hedge and awaiting her. But she did not look. The figure advanced apologetically toward her, and threw back his cape; but she remained oblivious. It was the tardy cavalier. She passed him, her eyes full of a far splendor. She passed so close to him that she brushed his arm; but she was a million miles away from any consciousness that he was there, and he saw it plainly. He started after her, surprised and mortified, wondering who could have displaced him.

HANIEL LONG.

Her Hair

The Princess sits in her tower room
Dreaming into her looking glass.
Dark tortoise shell goes in and out
Of the long gold of her hair.
"Sometimes I think it's the sunlight I'm combing,
My beautiful Princess," her handmaiden whispers.
But the Princess remembers another
Who kissed it pinned high in a soft yellow knot.
He said that it was like hay, as he kissed it,
Like hay . . .
More beloved than sunlight, or curtains of gold,
Is hay to the Princess.

CAROLYN HALL.

Dialogues of Scamander

I. RED BREECHES

SCAMANDER

When I was a youth, I was a devil in politics.

POLYCRATES

So we all were, Scamander. I am quite certain that nobody, since the beginning of time, wore redder breeches than I did when I was twenty-one. I was a great enemy of kings, Scamander, and reasonably hard on aristocrats. I was the arch-lover of mobs in my day, and nobody could have explained to you, better than I could, the perfection of popular government. But my red breeches have faded sadly in the weather.

SCAMANDER

I am as great an enemy of kings as I ever was.

POLYCRATES

I, too, have a certain distrust of them still. And—though I am growing old at a great rate and my hair is thinner above my ears—I am as great an enemy of bad kings as I was at twenty-one. I have, however, somewhat abated in fury. I have long withdrawn from the arena of political imaginings. I hold no more fantastic mass-meetings and parades in my soul, nor do I attend them in fact. The infinite inanity of our accomplishment in that field of endeavor nauseated me long ago. I cast, practically or metaphysically, no ballots. I learned early, Scamander, that the intelligent voter, "being completely swamped, is for all practical purposes completely

disfranchised." I seldom allow my fancy to stray into the mazes of human government. But when it does so—for all that my hair has grown thin over my ears and I have some rheumatism of recent arrival—I find myself donning, faded as they are, the old red youthful breeches of revolt. With good kings I have no quarrel. But I am an enemy of bad kings as always.

SCAMANDER

It is idle to make distinctions of good and bad, when all kings are undesirable.

POLYCRATES

It has been agreed, however, by the writers on political economy, Scamander, that a king of some sort is necessary, though you stuff him with goose-down. And I think we are privileged to call that king good who is wise, cultured, and sober, who has a warm but not easily prejudiced sympathy, who has complete control over his passions, and who has himself—or obeys counsellors who have—sufficient foundation in learning and morality to decide questions of individual or general importance with a sober and unbiased judgment. And I think we are privileged to call that king bad who is foolish, ignorant, and capricious, who is selfish to the core and liable to the most insane and unfounded prejudices, who will believe anything that is told him, easily swayed by any chance wind of doctrine from whatever quarter of pandemonium who has over his passions no control whatsoever, but flies into irrational rages and furies like any wild beast, and

who has not sufficient foundation in learning or culture (to say nothing of morality) to determine with reliable judgment the simplest questions in human economy.

SCAMANDER

You refer without question to the king of Bavaria who, at his coronation, barked like a dog.

POLYCRATES

I refer to our present incumbent.

SCAMANDER

This is a democracy.

POLYCRATES

This is an absolute monarchy. A ruler of whatever sort, Scamander, and especially a despotic ruler, may be termed, for metaphysical convenience, a king. And I persist in my way of thinking that our present king, being a conglomerate person composed of the mass of our compatriots, is a devilish bad one. I personally know that he is foolish, that he is ignorant, and that he is capricious. I know that he is selfish, with no respect or consideration for his inferiors. I know that he is easily persuaded away from, or into, any opinion. I know that he is prey to a thousand silly prejudices. I know that he will believe anything whatsoever, and venture to assert that I could sell to him a bottle of pink water for a handsome price, if I would insist it was good for the piles. I know that he has no control over his passions and that when aroused he is as merciless as a jungle-brute. I know that he has no foundation in learning or culture to enable him to decide the serious question of human economy.

And in his presence, Scamander, though I may eventually be hanged for it, I have worn, wear, and shall continue to wear red breeches.

II.—THE SONS OF METANIRA

SCAMANDER

There can be no question, Polycrates, that the immediate necessity of our civilization is a satirist of colossal attainments.

POLYCRATES

Satirists of colossal attainments appear with no more frequency, Scamander, than tremendous comets.

SCAMANDER

Nothing else can save us.

POLYCRATES

Then we are lost. The two men who have lived among us that might have reached colossal attainment in satire were, one of them, unfortunately, deficient in courage; the other, too bloated with spleen—and they are, anyway, dead. It is not improbable that we must wait a full hundred years for another, for such men are not born from every marriage, nor with every blue moon. All ages have produced twenty great warriors, poets, statesmen, to one great humorist. Most ages, however rich they may otherwise be, produce none at all. The gift of irony—which most magnifies a humorist, Scamander—is the rarest gift in the world. And if the value of literary genius were determined by scarcity, as is the case with old books, pewter and postage-stamps, Voltaire and Anatole France are priceless in a way Homer, Virgil, Milton and Dante can

never be. Indeed I have long held an unexpressed conviction that the great humorous literature of the world is the best literature of the world.

SCAMANDER

There is nobody else in breeches will agree with you.

POLYCRATES

It does not matter. My conclusion is sound, and it satisfies me—which satisfaction on one's own part is the only criterion of the perfect opinion. The great humorists, Scamander, give us not only as much as the poets and romancers and the philosophers: they give us more. Like the poets, they give us beauty—beauty of thought and beauty of style, richness and exhilaration of fancy, amusement and delight. But where the poetry of the world is, metaphysically speaking, superbly stupid, the great humorous literature of the world is almost incredibly wise. And in giving us their wisdom which we should otherwise need to seek in the philosophers, the humorists give us what the philosophers seldom or never give—that beauty and exhilaration, amusement and delight. The poets and romancers, Scamander, give us beauty and to spare; but there is very very little wit in them. The greybeard philosophers give us wisdom indeed, but it is wisdom without beauty, without delight, tedious in the telling. The poets and romancers have prattled for generations in tinkling or clinking speech that never wearies, but they have never told us anything (excepting one or two, Scamander, here and there, and these were gentlemen so complete that they were humorists too, as Shakespeare was, or madmen like Blake

and de Nerval who were divinely wise, not because they were poets, but because they were mad). It is only the great humorists who can tell us the truth in such a way we will believe it. I defy you to show me a magnificent passage of poetry in which mankind is properly drawn as a monkey, and in which it is clearly demonstrated that his destiny as a spiritual soul does not essentially matter. The philosophers do occasionally confide to us this conclusion, but they do it in so melancholy a fashion that one is as shy of believing it as of catching the mumps. Yet when we listen to the great humorists, Scamander, we find ourselves so enchanted by the exhilaration of their fancy and the exuberance of their speech that we are quite carried away and, before we know very well what we are about, passionately embrace the truth as though it were some sort of good news.

The great humorist, however, as I began by saying, is as rare as a great comet. His character is determined by rare prerequisites, still more rarely found in conjunction. The prerequisites of a great humorist, or a great satirist, Scamander, are, firstly, grandeur in irony, wisdom and art, and, secondly, courage. It requires spiritual courage to face the amazing farce of existence and it requires social courage to interpret it. A great satirist incurs danger. He may be starved, imprisoned, ostracized, or hanged. Worse may befall him. You will recall Abas, the son of Metanira, who was changed into a lizard for laughing at the gods. Without question, the profession is dangerous. Most of us, being very cowardly devils, prefer to laugh in our sleeves.

MARVIN LEAR.

Anthology of the Lowly

BY PAUL ELDRIDGE

ROOSTER.

The Sun was a red balloon
Which I blew high—high—
Beyond the mountain peaks,
And balanced on the sharp point
Of my crowing.
As my head was chopped,
I heard a loud and sudden clap—
I knew the Sun had burst.

ANT.

I was dragging my last load
To my well-filled cell,
Certain of a sumptuous Winter-life,
The recompense of Summer labor,
An object lesson to the idle cricket,
When the foot of God stepped heavily on me,
And crushed me—
I do not complain, O Lord,
Thou knowest best!

OX.

It was not the foot of God
That crushed you, Ant,
It was my giant-hoof
On my way to the slaughter-house.
God does not defile himself
By slaying greedy vermin—
He slashes only the wide necks of Oxen,
His chosen race.

CRICKET

Slave on, mad ants,
And let the hooves of oven
Crush you and your hoards!
I have chirped my humble note
In the eternal symphony of songs,
I, the insouciant troubadour,
And now,
This final gesture of my love
To the grasses of the Earth,
This last signal of my pity
To the crushed slaves!
Adios!

GIRAFFE.

In vain I stretched to its root my neck
Until it overtopped the tallest tree.
The stars to mock me,
Flew higher still.
Now my shadow stretches
Across all Infinity—
But where are the stars?

FISH.

The stars were not up, Giraffe,
The stars were in the depths of lakes
I swallowed many.
The worms tasted much better,
But they were more dangerous.

ASS.

I would barter eternal Paradise
With its infinite clover-field
For a day on Earth,
In which my former master
Should take the shape I had,
And I his,
And in my hand an unused stick—
His braying would proclaim to all the world
The great error of the proverb,
Which he always mingled with his blows—
“Patience is the greatest virtue.”

DOG.

It is not for the spirits of Asses
To judge their former masters
Or their proverbs.
Life broke many a heavy stick
On the back of your master—
A faithless wife, wicked children,
Stony ground, swollen knees—
It is much nobler to say:
“Patience is the greatest virtue”
Than kick stupidly your hind-legs,
Had you understood this, soul of an ass,
Your master would have wept over your
carcass
As he did over mine.

The Dancer

In a curiously illustrated edition of Balzac's *Peau de Chagrin* there is a strange and terrible face which some of you may remember having seen: It is the face of the bric-a-brac dealer who sold the mysterious parchment,—a forehead of immense breadth; a nose like that of Mephisto in Retch's outlines; a mouth thin, straight, and passionless; eyes large and sinister, with brows knotted above the nose like adders and rising wickedly toward the temples,—in short a face most sinister, most infernal, but withal fascinating with a diabolic fascination. Now can you imagine such a visage transformed and softened by youth and femininity, made beautiful without losing its strength of menacing wickedness; the nose a little less rugged, the eyes a little larger, the brows a little lighter? Then you have before you an idea of the dancer's face.

We sat and talked under the figtree. At least *she* talked: I listened under the steady gaze of her basilisk eyes. She seemed to speak all modern tongues fluently; had excited passion by her lithe grace and surpassing skill of limb-curving in half the capitals of Europe. She talked about Havana, Buenos Ayres, Valparaiso, Vera Cruz, Mexico City; described Spanish dances in a mocking way peculiar to herself, speaking all the while in a voice deep and sweet as the lower tone of some reed-instrument. But the depth of the voice and its sweetness wrought an unpleasant effect upon the listener,—such an effect as a wizard's music might have, luring to danger.

"I hate men," she said, with Italian vehemence, and an indescribable gesture of disgust;—"Bah, how I detest them! It amuses me when I am dancing to think of all those thousand eyes glaring upon me, as at something they are almost mad to touch and can not reach, and dare not touch if they could. It gives me pleasure; and often when I smile on the stage the smile is not mechanical; it is prompted by a sense of amusement which is too strong for me to resist. I know that hundreds of young fools will leave the theatre devoured with a wish they cannot gratify. Ah! I hate men!"

"Of course you know as well as I do that they pester and torment us. I am burdened with letters, presents,—stuff! Love! Ah bah! In a life such as mine one soon learns what love is worth! I used to read the letters I got. Now I seldom read more than the first line! Presents? Yes, all I want.

"Let me tell you my way of treating the fools. I never answer a letter unless it is accompanied by a present,—and the present must have some value—Flowers!—I hate flowers! What good are flowers to me? What value have flowers twenty-four hours after being thrown at my feet? I would be as pleased to receive a jar of ashes or a box of sand. Do you imagine I will pick up their worthless flowers? Never! I can always find some way to avoid that.

"Then I never answer in writing—never! No woman who is not an idiot will do that. I let somebody else carry my message—always worded in such a

way that the fool imagines it is the greatest privilege in the world to be permitted to see me. When he does see me, he pays dearly for it, if he is worth anything; and if he is not—which I soon find out—he never sees me again—except on the stage. And then it amuses me to know how I can torture him.

"I never say a pleasant word to an admirer. Why, if I did, the fool would really think he had made an immense impression! I have my own special way of treating him; he always brings me a present, of course. I never thank him! Never! I look at it; find fault with it; laugh at it; mock the man, and finally when he does not know what to do, I condescend to lay it aside. That means acceptance. He buys a better present next time; every time he buys me something, I treat him worse than before. Much worse! I have tormented men until they cried,—yes, cried: the ridiculous fools!

"No; the worse you treat men, the better they like you! And you know it is all passion,—wind and foam and smoke—a fancy,—a passing beat of the blood, for which a man would sacrifice my life and happiness if he could and dared! But I know them! I can play with them as an angler plays with a fish! I sometimes let them kiss me if they are not too nasty,—or feel my arms and shoulders, smooth me down—you know the way men like to stroke a woman, as if a woman were a cat! But I have a certain respect for myself. I believe in nothing but myself—and my mother, yes! Now do you suppose that I will allow men to make me their puppet, their doll, their kitten, their lemon to be squeezed and thrown away? Bah! I can play salamander. I am a juggler

that can handle fire without burning my fingers. I can touch pitch and not be defiled. No man can boast of the contrary. There are liars who say such things about all stage characters! but what do I care? I have made men pay well for all that men have said about me.

"Afraid? Pooh! Of what? I know desperate men when I see them. I have not lived and traveled for nothing. And I calculate my time nicely. I know just what I can accomplish during my stay in a city. And do you know that no man has dared to insult my face? I mean coarsely and abusively. They are afraid of me. The secret of success in life is to make people afraid of you. Only fools remain on the defensive. I am always on the aggressive. Insult! —I would poiniard a man if I saw a thought of insult in his eyes! Law! What do I care for law? I am a law unto myself. Why, a woman has always the advantage in such cases. Suppose I say: "That man came to see me under some pretext. He attempted to take advantage! I knew how to take care of myself;—I killed him! Who will contradict me?"

"Love! Nonsense! Perhaps, when I leave the stage! But I shall be mistress. Do you think I would allow a man to say to me, do this, do that!"

"I forget what I was telling you—When I allow a man to kiss me, he begins to be elated. He thinks he has an easy road before him. He begins to look confident. He becomes airy. Then the day after I refuse to speak to him, or see him at all! He feels as if struck by lightning. He imagines all kinds of things—that he has been slandered or something. He wants to make an ex-

planation. He becomes pathetically eloquent. He writes crazy letters. I pay no attention to him. He becomes feverish, furious, frantic, desperate. He would sell his soul just to be able to say one little word to me;—one little word would be for him what one little drop of water would be to the tongue of the

damned. And he cannot get the chance to speak. He thinks of killing somebody. Then is the time to step in and ask and receive. Finally they learn to hate me. That is just what I want, and that is how I rid myself of them. The Fools!"

LAFCADIO HEARN.

Clouds

There is a splendor in the castled clouds
 That floats like ghosts of vanished Babylons,
 When haughty silence moves above the crowds
 And sunset fills the blue with carven bronze.

There is a grandeur in the peopled mists
 Dark with the secret shadows of the sea,
 Rolling to keep their hushed mysterious trysts
 With phantom Babylons that are to be.

O you who crowd the streets and laugh and cry,
 You do not realize some distant time
 Silence shall chant the epics of the sky,—
 Your dream, your grief, the glitter of your prime:—

The shadows of your towers and lights and homes,
 Shall float above some unborn city's domes.

OSCAR WILLIAMS.

Tales of the Psychometric Reporter

NO. 3—CLEOPATRA TALKS ON WOMAN

Charles Benson, a reporter on the *Chronicle*, accidentally discovers that he possesses psychometric powers—that is, the ability to compel famous men and women in History to appear before him, provided he can hold in his hands some object that was connected with them when they were on earth. He has already obtained interviews for his paper with Bacchus and Diogenes.

“CHARLEY,” said the Boss to me on a nice Thursday morning, throwing all the editorials in the waste basket, “the woman question seems to have the swing indefinitely. They are not only amending the big Constitution, but all our own little ones. She’s got the call in the newspapers, the magazines and the books. We have got to find out what some of the dead and gone dames of the past think of this whole woman business. Who can you get on your psychometric wire? We want a big lass, one who knew all about her sex, and one who’s all wised up on what’s coming off in the world to-day.”

“Well, Boss,” I replied, “there’s quite a bundle of big girls lying around in history.

“There was Mamma Eve, who was the cause of Adam being fired out of his own little Luna Park; Jezebel, who played marbles with Satan when she was a mere baby; Hypatia, whose brow was so high that people thought she was bald; the Queen of Sheba, who was the fancy Hetty Green of her day; Cleopatra—”

“That’s the lass to go after, Charley,” said the Boss. “She’s the only one of the bunch who’s going strong yet. Why,

she’s even got a cigarette or something named after her.”

“You’re some scholar, Boss! You mean Fatima. But Cleopatra is our one best bet.”

I retired to my fumed oak “study.” How was I to reach Crazy Cleo, as the boys used to call Cleopatra back in my college days?

I might run up to Central Park, I thought, and bump my head against the Obelisk, but that did not belong to the Old Snake of the Nile, and according to the rules of psychometry I had to come in contact with something that had come into intimate contact with Cleo herself.

When I have a problem before me I fall into a brown study, and when I fall into a brown study at my fumed oak desk I have a habit of staring into a big crack in the wall opposite where I swivel. This crack had been widened from time to time by the office boys with their penknives.

After projecting my brown study into this crack for about five minutes, cogitating by what psychometric twist I could reach Crazy Cleo, I saw, to my great astonishment, a little head project itself from the crevice.

I went closer. It was a small serpent, and it looked at me with most intelligent eyes.

It opened its tiny mouth as I peered at it, and said:

“Don’t touch me, Charley. I’m the asp that stung Old Cleo to death. I got

a lot of that Egyptian wood alcohol in me still.

"The Madame's last word was 'stung!', if you want a little historical dope that has never got into print. I'm a friend of reporters, who are always being stung, and I know your strange gift and whom you want to interview. Just touch me with the butt-end of your fountain pen, and that'll establish a circuit to my old mistress, who is just now serving tea in Hades to old man Cain."

I touched, waited and conquered.

In a minute Cleopatra, the lady who played lawn tennis with the Caesars, buffaloed Marc Anthony and did the Von Kluck at Actium, was seated in my visitor's chair. The asp hurled a shot of wood alcohol from its locker in the corner of its mouth at a fly and retired.

The Queen of Egypt was dressed in a chintz robe, had flowing red hair, wore all her opera dimples and puffed a long cigarette.

"Made in hell," she said, as she threw a box of them on the desk. "Everybody works down there. Caesar has the cigarette concession. He married Carmen."

"Well, what do you want to know, you poor boob of a modern?"

Waiving the insult against the Age and the Flag, I got right down to case-notes.

"Queen, what do you think of women to-day?"

"That's a leading question, as Caesar said to me when I asked him whether he had made out his will in my favor."

"To-day all questions are leading questions, Cleo."

"Nix on the Cleo!" fired up Her Ma-

jesty. "You moderns are too fresh. Your psychometric powers have swelled your head. I'm 'Queen' to you—see? Cleo me again and I'll sick my asp on you, and you can send for the mummy man to box you up!"

"Beg pardon, Queen, but I merely used the title we used to give you in college—Crazy Cleo. It was all a mistake. You look every inch a Queen."

"Crazy Cleo—eh? Well, you can put it down right now for your solid mahog. posterity that Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt, the human ouija-board of Old Nile and the woman who made the first citizens of Rome look like the five-star editions of a blank copybook, was not crazy or yellow, or anything else, but an edition de luxe of the Eternal Feminine, and, as for the woman of to-day, that you ask my opinion on, it is she who is crazy—and cowardly.

"They go around to-day asking men for their rights, for the ballot, for equal latch-key privileges, for sex equality, for a man's wage-scale, and all that. In my day we didn't ask; we took.

"You know my father, Ptolemy (Old Tolly, the throne-lizards used to call him), died when I was seventeen, and left me all of Egypt, including its jazz joints and old cable cars.

"Well, I was born a 'modern' woman, as you call them to-day. I believed in my sex to the last layer of rouge. We are the super-men, and it makes me sore to see the women of this country to-day on their knees asking men for their rights.

"My first job—all the records of my reign were destroyed on my retreat before the nosy Luskers from Rome—was to annex an amendment to the Egyptian Constitution not only giving

women the right to vote but disfranchising all men before their fifty-sixth year, for that is about the time they begin to cultivate the vegetable patch which they call their brain.

"I advise the women of America to pull that off on you men if they ever get in full control of the government at Washington and the state legislatures. If they can't get three-fourths of the States necessary to ratify the anti-man amendment, let them abolish the Constitution and do it by the statute.

"If they are in a majority on the Supreme Court Bench, that body will decree the abolition of the Constitution absolutely constitutional."

"Now, that's just the crazy way a woman's mind works, Queen," I said, coming to the defence of *Homo Meo*.

"A woman's mind works exactly as it works. And there's another thing, it is time all women stopped making excuses for the way their mind works. I don't care a Sphinx for logic; logic is the absence of genius.

"My second act, by the way, when I was only eighteen and a half, was to abolish all the Night Schools of Reason in my country, and substitute Centers for the Cultivation of Impulse.

"History, I tell you again, Benson, has got me all wrong. They have put me down as a Sandow of Love, a flat-buster, a winking Wanda, a gondola Lizzie that passed her days floating up and down the Nile to the tinkle of cymbalums; but I was a great administrator for the women, by the women and with the women.

"The tendency of the times here in this world right now is 'Back to Cleopatra'!"

"I knew the political and diplomatic

game backward. I toyed with the Caesars and made a bum out of Marc Anthony to give woman her place in the sunlight.

"I hadn't any more morals than the average healthy human being. I took a night off from my cares and worries once in a while and when I went by boat down to my country house on the Nile all the bald-headed Senators whom I allowed to think that they thought, swam after me doggy fashion down the river.

"I could box, fence, play Pyramid poker with the most hardened tin-horn gambler from Rome, and was never bluffed at Osiris stud in my life."

"Oh, no; I don't recommend all these things to-day—that they should be incorporated as part of the programme of the Woman Movement, but a little of it will help you lords of miscreation to find your level.

"As mismanagers of everything in the world your are in Class AA."

She grinned the grin of a Rameses at me as she stuck her dainty foot on the table, pushing to a thousand pieces on the floor my expensive china humidor.

Being a gentleman, I pretended I didn't hear the crash. Besides, she was a Queen, and, after all, there was something in what she said—although she was running true to her names, *Crazy Cleo* and *Pussy Pat*.

"Do you think, then, Queen, that woman is destined to take the place of man in everything in the future?" I weakly blurbed.

"The Queen Bee of the world is coming as sure as you are a mucilaginous boob," bawled the Old Serpent.

"Man will work for woman. You are all born drones anyhow, and your work

is all a bluff. We have always done the real constructive work of the world.

“Civilization is as rotten as your League of Nations is obsolete. We are not only going to take away all your rights, but may incarcerate you in male harems if you put up a holler about it.

“You only think you know. You men are a combination of sentimental ass and bluff—it’s fifty-fifty.

“Good-by. Is my hat on straight?”

Before I could recover from my ossification she was gone.

The asp winked at me from the crack in the wall, and, before I could land on it with my paper-weight it, too, was gone.

And by all the psychometric powers, I want to see no more of her or her like!

My pride had a black eye.

BENJAMIN DE CASSERES.

Droll Marcellus

That Death should be foolhardy and obtuse
 Enough to take *him* as he takes a goose,
 Marcellus wonders, deeming himself wise
 And much too valuable for demise.
 Marcellus says: “If spared the scythe of fate,
 One day Marcellus will enunciate
 The great, august, illuminating Word
 The gods await, and yet have never heard.
Cut down Marcellus? It would be absurd.”

J. B. CLUNY.

Love comes with a rushing of mighty waters, and departing leaves its victims holding hands in a swamp.

In the March of Progress the healer of old evils invariably cedes his place to the inventor of new tortures.

Two Suicides

THE great number of unhappy young artists—poets, painters, composers, *et sic de similibus*—who have perished by their own hand and desire tempts one to a belief in the suggested affinity between genius and suicide. One might work a passable epigram out of the thought that often genius must prove its existence, paradoxically by destroying itself. Fortunately, the greater number of artists, young and old, happy and unhappy, whom the world has agreed to call geniuses, who have died tranquilly in bed of disease or old age, forbids a full acceptance of the ingenious theory. In spite of which, the list of self-slain geniuses is sufficiently moving to arouse interest and motives and causes.

The keyword, of course, is *genius*. A young poet destroys himself; at once we begin to speak of him as a genius. Before his shocking *dénouement*, usually, we have spoken little of him in any connection. Was suicide, then, the proof of genius, or the sensational hollow required to call attention to genius?

Having defined genius as exalted intellectual power, capable of operating independently of tuition and training, and marked by an extraordinary faculty for original creation, we think of a person tagged with the epithet as one in advance of his fellows and his day, and, consequently, somewhat of an eccentric—a position strengthened, it must be admitted, by the recorded peculiarities of our oldest established “geniuses.” From this thought it is only a step to believing genius slightly akin

to insanity, and another step to believing the terms synonymous.

The belief in the last notion but one, is still widespread among persons who will be the first to deny the converse of the proposition—that inasmuch as a genius is something of a lunatic, a lunatic is necessarily something of a genius. If the one always is true, I see no reason for denying the other; but I do not for a moment believe the one always to be true. Suicide, however, to the many is the final proof of insanity, and, therefore, in a writing man (or a painting man) of genius.

The mistake seems to arise from thinking of genius, perforce, as manifesting itself by what we are pleased to believe eccentric signs. Seeking with obscene eye for strangenesses in the advertised genius, we find them easily enough, and when he has closed his life by taking it, we understandingly nod, as much in triumph as in pity. Now, at length, we know him for the genius that he is; he has attested his right to the name. Crime, insanity, voluntary isolation, these are significant signs; *felo de se* is proof. *Voila!* a new genius is added to our interesting gallery, and our pleasant faith in our own anserine judgment again is confirmed. Meanwhile, the excellent fellow who not yet has been driven to this final act, wants our encouragement; and continues to want it. To obviate an easy rejoinder, it freely may be granted that eccentricity may be purely a pose; but, even so, it may cloak genius. An eccentricity may also cloak—merely eccentricity. The in-

credible folly is that of making hard and fast rules for anybody.

Now the truth must be that some geniuses (I have begun with this word, and so I shall continue to use it, although I do not particularly like it) are insane and some are not—a commonplace; but are we to insist that only he shall be called insane who has found unbearable "the intolerable evil called life"? It may be indeed that genius of a certain order is closely akin to insanity, and when a youth sings lovingly of Death the paramour, then woos and wins the sable embrace, one is fortified in the belief; yet such terms as "morbidity" and "unhealthy" are more or less arbitrary, and the youth himself will tell you that they have nothing to do with art. Beauty for him is a comprehensive word, and he finds beauty where he will.

For many persons who are too greatly obsessed by Gautier's doctrine of "art for art's sake," the suicide of a young artist is the perfect conclusion, the consummate touch necessary to round out a brief and tragic existence, leaving its fame a thing of slight and sinister beauty—as complete and perfect in little as a sonnet or a cameo. Similarly, the assassination of Lincoln, for them, while deplorable on a number of counts, is the perfect solution: it ends his history with artistic completeness, and leaves his life a faultless poem. Thus we see in operation an aesthetic Destiny, terribly at work on human lives, and deeply concerned lest a false nuance shall mar the pitiless perfection of its art.

All this is fascinating and dangerous and highly immoral. One may speak of morality in this connection, perhaps, without inviting a sneer. To be speci-

fic, at this point, one does not contend that suicide is either moral or immoral; but the thought which would make of suicide a splendid and ineffable thing is as vicious and immoral as it is perilously alluring.

Hubert Crackanthorpe went to his death in the River Seine at the age of 26 years. Richard Middleton swallowed poison in Brussels at an age only a little more advanced. Both have been called geniuses, and undoubtedly *were* geniuses. But they were not geniuses because they committed suicide; which is to say, merely, that no such proof of their genius was required. Neither was loudly hailed as a genius, however, until he had destroyed himself. Without difficulty we may find in the work of both, evidences of a morbid wantonness that would make a bride of Death, particularly perhaps in the poetry of Middleton. If the fact may not be gainsaid, neither may it be exaggerated. The tales of Hubert Crackanthorpe and the sketches and poems of Richard Middleton, deeply as they are concerned often with the idea of death, obviously are the tales and poems of Youth, which ever is concerned with life's supreme mystery. Such evidences may be found in the writings of any person who ever has written; only we do not begin to look for them until a man has killed himself.

Hubert Crackanthorpe killed himself for love of a woman; Richard Middleton for loathing of life, the "intolerable evil" of which he was too conscious. Crackanthorpe, I am sure, loved life; Middleton, I think, hated it. Both died of their own wish and by their own deed. Crackanthorpe lived vividly, with a passionate interest in his fellow creatures; Middleton looked out

of a window and dreamed fantastic dreams. Crackanthorpe, when he wrote, wrote of the lives he had encountered about him, and knew; of their little joys and sorrows, their pride and their helplessness, their egotism and their humility, and in such detached, impersonal fashion that the irony and terror of life was more realistically suggested by his stark, although impressionistic reporting than any amount of comment could have made it. Middleton remembered his childhood and wove fancies out of old dreams, often very happy ones indeed, bubbling with a whimsical humor; but when he could not be a child, it was of another existence he dreamed, and his lines were sombre with the thought of death.

Crackanthorpe perhaps derives from Maupassant; Middleton almost certainly from Baudelaire. It will be recalled that Barbey d'Aurevilly wrote to Baudelaire that the only thing for the latter to do was to become a Christian or blow out his brains. Crackanthorpe belonged to the "eighteen-nineties," and Middleton to a somewhat later period, although Middleton reads much like a *fin de siècle* "master," even more so often than Crackanthorpe; indeed he is somewhat of an anachronism. But this matter of derivation and placing seems always an impertinence to dwell upon, since we cannot know all that has gone into the making of an artist, and classifying genius by periods is an extreme idiocy of pedantry.

I have used the word "reporting" in connection with the work of Crackanthorpe, and it may have been an unhappy word, for it inevitably suggests a gray picture of fact unrelieved by any touch of imagination. To suggest that of Crackanthorpe would be unfair, when

evidences of his imaginative intelligence are to be found in almost any of his tales. What was meant is that in his careful and penetrating studies he is so concerned with the cruelty of life, with the emotional crises of human existence, that one can almost believe him to be chronicling experiences to which he was a witness, in which he was a participant. Youthful as is the cynicism of his uncompromising situations —his strongest book wears the terrible title, "Wreckage"—there is a maturity about his work that is little less than extraordinary. Richard Le Gallienne, who knew him, says that "hardly another writer of his generation had so thoroughly equipped himself for his calling of novelist by so adventurous a study of human life." I do not know exactly what that means, but even accepting it for what it would seem to mean, there must have been in Crackanthorpe's work much of what Henry James calls "anticipated experience"; and we can hardly deny imagination to a young man who, in his early twenties, could write "A Dead Woman." His was the gift of clairvoyance also vouchsafed Stephen Crane.

Had he lived, Hubert Crackanthorpe would have more than fulfilled his amazing promise. The "Set of Village Tales" at the end of his second volume, "Sentimental Studies," and the "Vignettes" gathered into the little volume of that name, suggest powerfully the vivid impressionism toward which he was tending. These sad, glad little etchings in sunshine and in mist, for all their fragmentary appearance, are among his completest works.

In Middleton, the dreamer seemed ever to predominate, although often he was a bit careful to withhold the dream

from his readers. But this is true only, I think of his poetry, which, although many do not think so, is insignificant beside his prose. Life, for Richard Middleton, was a great mystery, not perhaps to be solved, but from little journeys toward the solution of which many half-revealed, supernal secrets might be glimpsed. Where Crackan thorpe was at his best in the episodic, concerned as he also was with the mystery of life, and relentlessly exposed his subjects in clinical detail, Middleton hovered on the borders of the occult, scorned anything like reality, and gave to his fancies the semblance of an allegory. *What does it all mean?* is his constant query; and, if he never answers the question, he furnishes significant clews, while over and through his tales there is a great light as of something ineffable about to be made known. There is much of what Arthur Machen calls "ecstasy" in his pages, notably in "The Ghost Ship," his finest production, and an indubitable masterpiece. Incidentally, Machen furnishes an introduction to the volume of that name, and I can think of no finer compliment to the memory of Richard Middleton than to say that Machen himself might have written the initial story. Poe, Stevenson, nor Ambrose Bierce need have taken shame to sign "The Coffin Merchant," nor Anatole France to attach his name to "The Soul of a Policeman."

Many of the tales in "The Ghost Ship" are, as I already have suggested, memories of childhood—amazingly remembered, superbly re-lived. "The Ghost Ship" will lead readers to "The Day Before Yesterday," a significant volume with a significant title, which contains much that is excellent, and so on to

"Monologues," a final medley of periodical sketches, slighter than the others, but touched with the genius of a hunter after beauty who gave up the pursuit ere it was half run.

Crackan thorpe perished at 26; Middleton at 29. Crackan thorpe loved life passionately, and was fond of "healthy" adventure and sport in the open; Middleton, seeking the beauty he could not find, save as he could imagine it, came to loathe life, I think, and probably cared very little for what he would believe its superficial attractions and allurements. Each voluntarily relinquished the life he could no longer endure. Each is now called *genius*, and is busily "collected."

The person of sense, of course, knows perfectly well that these men did not prove their genius by their tragic self-effacement. It is none the less true that by calling attention to their genius in such shocking fashion a certain glamour has been added to their names, a certain piquant fascination to their work; and unthinking persons have not hesitated to connect the phenomenon with our earlier proposition. Hubert Crackan thorpe was no more mad than you who read, although one hesitates to assert that he was unvisited by a vision of fate. Richard Middleton, although his case is more complicated, certainly was no more mad than, let us say, I, who write—*Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero!*—since, reading him, I cry: "If this be madness, let us have less sanity!"

Many a man, I fancy, has killed himself because of a woman, who, had the pistol missed fire, or the rope broken, would have made no second attempt, but have gone on living quite sanely and quite thankfully for two deliverances;

while if a thorough disgust with life as it is lived by the majority is a sign of insanity, I am personally acquainted with some dozens of apparently sane persons who are candidates for the asylum.

Hubert Crackan thorpe and Richard Middleton took their lives because, at the moment, they felt that they could no longer bear to go on living. That they sincerely believed this, is pitifully obvious. You may think Crackan thorpe foolish, if you wish to, but for him the death of Love was the end of all—at that moment, just before the plunge—and it is an emotion at which I dare not care to sneer. But I am very sorry indeed. Middleton's death must have been, partially, in the nature of a protest, despite the beating wings that are heard in his poetry. I can think of nothing which conceivably might have eased Crackan thorpe; but Middleton's beautiful writings all were placed in covers after his death Suppose someone had whispered a few words of sympathy and appreciation, and it had been a bit less difficult for him to live and write and sell his tales!

Or would either, had he lived, have written as well again? It is a favorite notion that few men are "called before their time"— or words to that effect—that, at death, ordinarily, a writer

has done all that he would have done of any importance; has said, in effect, all that he had to say. This strikes one as superstition and cant. If it were sound even in theory, it is perfectly obvious that many distinguished writers of this our little day ought to have died years ago. Perhaps, however, they are dead, and we have not yet found it out; their publishers may be "holding up their arms."

But need a writer die when he has written what he had to write? When he has said what he had to say? Why, for a time, should he not be allowed the happiness of some years of leisure as a reward for his labors? . . . Often, poor fellow, because the finer his product has been the less it has brought him wherewith to finance a trifle of leisure—always supposing him to be an artist.

I don't know exactly what this paper proves, whether it proves anything, or whether it is intended to prove anything. What it is, is a transcript of thoughts induced by listening to careless criticism and specious epigrams, and by reading the absurd comments of learned book-sellers, in catalogues of books that are rare and expensive chiefly because they are beautiful and good.

VINCENT STARRETT.

My Dream Remembers

The world escapes me.
—My dream surrounds
All shapes and shadows
And all scents and sounds.

Noble was Nineveh:
Raucous her men.
But that which is not,
Can it once have been?

My dream remembers
How after all
These shapes shall vanish
And silence fall.

JOHN MCCLURE.

Reviews of Books

PEOPLE OF DESTINY

By PHILIP GIBBS

(*Harper*, 1920)

“People of Destiny” is a proud name for the inventors of the shimmy and jazz, but it was, when Sir Philip Gibbs used it in writing this book, and is perhaps still (for all our rabbit-like evasions of that destiny) an appropriate one. When he visited the United States after the armistice and before the conclusion of European peace, Sir Philip Gibbs really believed us to be the People of Destiny. It lay with us to cement the

structure of world-peace or remove the piling. The world was then looking hopefully to us, as a leader of some sobriety in the labyrinth of entangled national relations. We were the people of destiny two years ago. Perhaps we are still. But certainly no widely trumpeted people of destiny ever scuttled out of its immediate responsibility more like a lobster than we did.

Sir Philip Gibbs, though his visit to America was a flying one, kept his wits about him and appraised us as he went. His book, sketchy as it is, is superior as

a criticism of the American democracy to Arnold Bennett's. Bennett's eye for detail was his undoing. Gibbs endeavored to get a glimpse of the broad outlines of American national character.

He saw clearly enough the farce of liberty under a democracy—was especially impressed by the complete abrogation of individual liberty in war-time—and expressed his amazement at the docility of the American populace. He was quick to note the “intolerance of free thought which happens to conflict with the popular sentiment, as ruthless as in Russia under Czardom, and the absolute “intolerance of minorities.” He called us “a middle-class empire”—“a nation of nobodies, great with the power of the common man.” He fore-saw in the astounding luxury of wealth (a visible display of riches which is carried farther in the American metropolis than in any capital of Europe) and the “sullen discontent among wage-earners” the certainty of a conflict which will be violent, certainly, and perhaps bloody. He was not at all sure when he wrote—and is no doubt less sure, now—that this People of Destiny would fulfill that destiny creditably.

There is a nervous overtone of anxiety in the volume from begining to end. The author, as clearly as Sir Auckland Geddes, sees the shadow of an Anglo-American break. He tries desperately, though vainly, to arrange an understanding. His last page is an appeal for mutual friendship. But in the first half of his book before he enters upon the subject of America's destiny among the nations, he merely records his impressions.

We have noted above some of his broader conclusions. But he makes,

too, several remarks of local application which are well worth attention. He remarks, for instance, that American women “read prodigiously,” the very existence of the writing clan depending upon them. He says that he found among American newspapermen, “apart from their own party politics and prejudices, a desire for fair play and truth” (courageously put, but a damnation by no means faint!) He startles one out of one's wits by announcing that he was “overwhelmed with admiration for the American system of education”—but goes on to say that it was the spaciousness and convenience of the buildings and playgrounds which overwhelmed him. He notes in our motion-pictures which are attended by all classes, “the utter falsity of it all,” “the treachly sentiment” or “flaming vice” which “would have a perverting effect on public imagination if it were taken seriously,” (which, of course, it is). And he says that he looks for “a Golden Age of literature and art in America which shall be like our Elizabethan period, fresh, and spring-like, and rich in vitality and promise.” We must hope he is right.

The book is sketchy. It is not a final appraisal and was not intended as such. It is not the body of opinion of a deep thinker or of a thoroughly critical observer. There have been many better books written about the American nation. Sir Philip Gibbs was intentionally, almost religiously, goodnatured about everything American. His visit was too short and too lively for any really important criticism to spring from it. But with his quick journalistic pen he has given us a volume of impression and opinion which most intel-

ligent American men and women will be glad to look into, and from which most of them will derive some real help in their attempt to understand or to visualize the American democracy.

J. M.

BASIL EVERMAN

By ELSIE SINGMASTER

(Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920)

Miss Singmaster's book comes as a distinct relief in this age of morose and impolite fiction, so much of it unnecessarily sordid. She writes with a calm intensity of purpose, a passionate idealism, which is rare. Her style is vivid, fluent, yet not burdened by over-elaboration—neither terse nor lavishly expressive. She seems delightfully free from the slightly morbid desire to write *vindictively* and *only* of drab lives passed amid dingy surroundings; of slightly dirty persons, egotistically introspective, and forever consciously inhibiting their primitive impulses.

There is a wealth of subtle characterization in *Basil Everman*, a pervasive charm, a note of authenticity, which easily wins for her a place beside our two most representative women novelists—Edith Wharton and Willa Cather. It is fiction at its best; fiction written as an art, not as a rather painful duty.

Basil Everman, himself, is dead. Not having known him during his short lifetime is one of those haunting missed experiences of which life is so prodigal. However, one becomes remarkably aware of him through the influence of his personality upon certain characters of the story which opens twenty years after his death.

One sees him with Thomisina's eyes as "tall and very slender. I should say

his most remarkable feature was his eyes. They were gray with flecks of black in them. They seemed almost to give out light. Webster's eyes are said to have had this effect. If you had ever seen Basil you would know what that meant. He was extraordinarily quick of mind and speech and motion. Sometimes as a boy, he seemed to give an impression of actual flight. He had mentally also the gifts of wings. He seemed to live in a different world, to have deeper emotions and more vivid mental experiences than the rest of mankind. He was the most radiant person I ever knew—I think that is the best word for him. He was a creature of great promise."

One forgives Evan Utterly's manners for the sake of his literary enthusiasms, one feels with him that: "Basil Everman stands only second to Edgar Allan Poe among the litterateurs of the United States; of that even this small amount of work gives ample proof. It is the most deplorable tragedy in the history of American literature that the amount should be so small." One feels Utterly's anger at the stolidity, the incomprehensible ignorance and vagueness of Basil's own people, of Waltonville in general. "He used to write some" his sister says. "He played some, too, on the piano."

Poor Basil! He wore "flowing neckties at a time when neckties were small; he used well selected words when the rest of mankind were indifferent to their speech; he drew sometimes a parallel from the classics—consequently Waltonville thought him queer." . . .

"He did not always come to meals on time, or go, candle in hand, in solemn procession to bed when the rest of the

family went, old Dr. Everman in his white stock, Mary Alcestis looking tearfully back over her shoulder, hoping in terror that Basil might at that moment be heard on the porch. They watched him, were embarrassed for him, apologized for him. They thought of him, in moments of unusual charity, as not quite sound."

"Are there no interesting facts about him," asks Utterly. "No memorabilia, no traditions of any kind? If he had been dead only twenty years, he should still be alive in the minds of men and women, especially of women. A man like that couldn't simply grow up and die, like a vegetable!"

Basil's sister, Mary Alcestis, the wife of the President of Walton College, is perhaps, the most interesting character in the book. Her struggle of twenty years to do an incredibly foolish thing is depicted with the light sure touch of an artist. The intense love which she still feels for her brother's memory, and her misguided loyalty to him, almost succeed in wrecking two charming young lives.

Professor Scott and his family are admirably drawn,—Mrs. Scott with a delicate irony which never once becomes mere caricature.

Thomasina Davis is a very lovable and intelligent woman, portrayed with sympathy and understanding.

Walton College, of which Basil Everman's father was president; of which his brother-in-law is president at the time of this story, "belonged to an order which was elsewhere passing. Lying a little north of Mason and Dixon's line; it resembled in many ways a pleasant Southern town." In the

eighties it had not yet "dreamed of being a 'greater Walton.' Satisfied with its own modest aims, it had not opened its eyes to that 'wider vision' of religion and 'service' which was to be loudly proclaimed by the next generation." The buildings were ivy-covered. There was a "broad street, sloping up to the college gates; here were tall trees and broad lawns, and everywhere masses of roses and honeysuckle." And the "music of bees in the blossoming honeylocust."

Utterly, in his search for Basil Everman, his visit to Waltonville as to a shrine, sees it first upon Commencement Day. "In the distance the Academic procession is approaching, the gowned and hooded shepherds of the flock leading, the boys and girls, similarly gowned, followed sedately after. From the Chapel toward which they advanced came the sound of music, a festival march well played on a sweet-toned old organ. A bit of poetry came to Utterly's mind:

"Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
What little town by river or seashore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel
Is emptied of its folk this pious Morn?"

"How delightfully Attic" he said to himself, not without satisfaction in the knowledge which made this comment possible."

After reading such books as *Time and l'Eternity* and *Glamour*, Basil Everman is, indeed, a delight. One is grateful to Miss Singmaster for many things—not the least among them her sincere belief in beauty, happiness, and unselfishness, and her refreshing humor.

A. S. L.

ANTHOLOGY OF MAGAZINE
VERSE FOR 1920

By WM. STANLEY BRAITHWAITE
(*Small-Maynard*, 1920)

We refuse to believe that the art of verse in America is in as bad case as that in which Mr. Braithwaite with his series of discouraging anthologies has persistently portrayed it. We know that the United States is today, as always heretofore, overshadowed by England, that we have no one to compare with William Butler Yeats, Walter de la Mare, John Masefield or Thomas Hardy; that our poets, even the best that we have, are little fellows. But we know, too, that American poetry is not the sorry field that Mr. Braithwaite's anthologies of the last decade would indicate.

We know that there is no country today which has so many poets who are, within their limitations, excellent. We know that an anthology of American poems of the past twenty years, critically compiled, would be a creditable anthology—that it would be an anthology pleasing in the same way as "England's Helicon" was pleasing four hundred years ago, that it would be rich in minor chords enchanting in its variety. And most of us are sure that not since that Elizabethan period could any nation have assembled a handsomer body of small songs. There are few of us who believe that America is likely soon to produce a great poet. A nation so fidgety as this one, is not likely to do so. If it does, it will be out of sheer luck and certainly not out of any deep stability of intellect or emotion in the national character. But in the field of small songs and occasional sardonic

overtures (in which Edwin Arlington Robinson so excels) America is today the poet's paradise.

If Mr. Braithwaite had been critically assembling all our golden eggs for the past ten years, we should be grateful to him. He has had a rare opportunity. But he has from the first—the song is old—failed miserably.

The anthology for 1920 shows the same unhappy defect as its predecessors. Mr. Braithwaite, about three-fourths of the time, shows an aptitude for the selection of the non-essential that is almost incredible. Considering the "depressing drivel" with which he covers so many pages in each of his anthologies one is forced to conclude, generally, that the good poems which he prints must have got in by accident.

But perhaps Mr. Braithwaite is developing an ear and an eye for the finer stuff. This anthology for 1920 seems, on the whole, superior to most of its predecessors. There is in it more sound poetry, in proportion to the drivel and bombast, than before. It contains some excellent selections, and the intelligent reader, though he may suffer poignantly between whiles, will enjoy the moments spent in acquainting himself with some exhilarating poems by Maxwell Anderson, Louis Untermeyer, Edwin Arlington Robinson and Carl Sandburg, some beautiful ones by Sara Teasdale, William Griffith, Edna St Vincent Millay and David Morton, and a scattering of others, neither thoroughly exhilarating nor thoroughly beautiful, but nevertheless excellent, by Herbert S. Gorman, Winifred Welles, and Conrad Aiken.

F. X. B.

Two Husbands

One man, having tired of his wife, killed her.

He did so without unnecessary brutality, in a humane and considerate manner, and all authorities agreed that she died without suffering.

He was hanged.

Another, less candid, also tired of his wife. He sought consolation in the society of others, introduced a rival into her household and treated her with such contumely that she died a thousand deaths each day.

He became immensely wealthy and was elected to Congress.

GEORGE STEELE SEYMOUR.

Gewgaw

Puppets we
Toys of a day
Marionettes for mockery
Tattered dolls a god at play
Fretful grown and dolefully tired
From the getting of all that he desired
Twists and tears and tosses away
Marionettes for mockery
Toys of a day
Puppets we

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